

*Introduction to the painting exhibition 26 October in Ringsted congress centre:
Zonationpaintings from the Øresund region.*

Hydrologist and scientist

I am born in Vordingborg and grew up on the Island Mors and in Holsted in South Jutland. I finished high school from Esbjerg state school in 1976. After that I moved to Copenhagen, and educated as civilengineer from Danish Technical University in Lyngby in 1982. I worked five years at Danish land development company, hydrometrical department first in Slagelse, next in Viborg. In 1987 I moved back to Copenhagen and worked in the small consulting company Tage Sørensen which later was bought by Rambøll.

In 1993 I made the move to Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS. I have worked at GEUS since with modelling of groundwater and surface water flow and integrated water resource management, IWRM. Starting in consultancy, in recent years with research. I have a master degree from Roskilde University Centre, RUC in Psychology of Organisation from 2006, which I use as part of my work with IWRM.

Painter

I started with croquis in 1982. First pencil, charcoal and later aquarel.

In the later years I have focused on drawings of Copenhagen cityscapes.

I started with oil painting around 1987. My preferred tool: a painting knife. Starting in aqua oil a water based oil painting.

I named my first painting serie: "Geological arabesque" and had my first exhibition in 2001.

Next serie, "New York cool" was exhibited from 2004, now painted in oil on canvas, this was my abstract expressionist period.

My third serie had the name Copenhagen U turn, again painted in oil, but now with focus on figurative cityscapes, with motives first captured with drawings.

This serie also include drawings in coal and pastel.

In the later years I have painted in acrylics. You can study examples outside.

In a way I am autodidakt, but I always preferred to paint in a group, in the atelier in Lyngby, in the city in summerevenings, or collecting feedback from fellow artists using the internet.

In the beginning I took a point of departure starting with Cézanne and his followers. Next

New York School, de Kooning and many others was my inspiration. And most recently with

German expressionist¹ painters, and Bay area figurative movement from the American west coast, where I find Lieberkorn as one of the pioneers.

From Geological arabesque to Copenhagen U turn

Geology is a natural history based science which describes how the Earth was developed, and as part of that the development of life. Geology uses three important terms: time, processes and materials, which are mutually interdependent. But even though geologists work with time, they normally don't use the arabesque with its lyric and musical qualities².

Continents crash into each other and mountains are folded and eroded by wind, water, freezing and glaciers, become sand dunes and are deposited on the bottom of the waters.

Are covered by younger deposits, are pressed, melted and spewed out by a volcano.

The freshwater cycle in this geological cycle holds an important transport function. The geological cycle assures that the earth is under eternal change, and thanks for that³, as Kaj Sand Jensen expressed it in his volume "Naturen i Danmark – Geologien". If not, the earth would have been flat, dry and barren desert, where living organisms wouldn't have had a chance for surviving.

In hydrology and due to its relation to the broader social and human sciences e.g. in leadership and management theories there is an opening toward the arabesque, because adaptive and integrated water resource management basically requires social learning. Social learning is the capability to make collective decisions and actions, when this is necessary. Of reasons unknown we have lost our ability to social learning in our time, therefore we have become more vulnerable than before, and the political will to protect the environment seems to have evaporated.

Geological arabesque harbours a paradox. The arabesque was first developed in Arab countries decorative art, where the plant ornaments were developed in connection with an old Islamic picture ban. In the antique the arabesque came to Europe via Greece. It was reinvented in Italian Renaissance. From here it went on to baroque and rococo art. In the Romanticism, the landscape and nature played an important role, and here the

¹ Norbert Göttler: Der Blaue Reiter. Monographie. Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag. 2008. Hamburg.

² Marie-Louise Svane: Formationer i europæisk romantik. Arabesk en romantisk grænsefigur. Museum Tusulanums Forlag. Københavns Universitet 2003 (In Danish).

³ Kaj-Sand Jensen: Naturen i Danmark. Geologien. 2006 (In Danish)

arabesque appealed to fantasy and the lyrical-musical movements. This means that the starting point and background for abstract art, which started with Cézanne and his followers⁴, originated from the Romantic movement, where the arabesque and its blending of pictures, music and poetical signs, grounded a shared theme of something enigmatic, hidden, which are revealed and sustained at the same time. And such a limbo, between known and unknown is also keys to our time.

Zonation in natural science means a subdivision into geographical zones and habitats after certain factors, like e.g. temperature, precipitation, salt content or radiation can define habitats for animals and plants.

In the same way zonation in relation to groundwater protection delineate different areas volume of groundwater recharge and vulnerability in relation to groundwater. Zonation as a painting process therefore, for me, is about allowing cityscapes to take on form, subjective established from blueprints and the memory, with acrylics or oil on canvas, in forms and colors which allow space for fantasy, and provide a diversity of perceptions to come into play. When the abstract expressionist (the unknown/the spirit) is integrated with the figurative (the known/the nature), we have a zonation painting. But it is important that the picture at the same time has been created in a collective learning process with feedback from fellow artists.

Two examples

"Down under" illustrate the concept used in zonationpaintings from Øresund region. A beach, two women, a warm and a cold, in a dialogue, patterns on the wall, here the arabesque as interpreted by aboriginals in Australia. The boats are from Zanzibar, the forest and the sky is from Øresund region, but the beast is from Port Douglas in Australia. That's the modern world, without boundaries, vulnerable toward rolling flood waves from tsunamis caused by faults in the underground, climate catastrophes and global financial crisis. But yet the woman continues their dialogue as if nothing had happened.

Zonation paintings are also storeytelling, typically has geometrical shapes which gives rythme, they are abstract, expressive and figurative in the same time. An in the middle of it all we have the uncertainty, the boundary between known and unknown, factual and ambiguous like the postmodern world and it's a capella

⁴ Se www.zonering.dk

Another example is from the serie Copenhagen U turn from 2007. Here the cityscape enters the scene. The painting "Indirect from my hearth" illustrate the multivocals, or the new uncertainty caused by multiple knowledge frames:

- Is it a street or a stream which twist between the houses?
- Is it a street or a woman?
- Down in left bottom corner, is it a face or a building?
- Are we at Købmagergade in Copenhagen in 1500 century, in 2007 or 2070?
- Are we in Eastern Europe some place behind the iron curtage or in a city in Jutland?

When I paint Copenhagen as I do, it is simply because Copenhagen is so beautiful, because the change during the sun downer is like capturing the sun going down over Gran Canyon or Nyhavn during the jazz festival, where house and chimneys between day and night swing and sing, as picture, sound and other sensory perceptions become a unity, and a draft, which later eventually becomes a painting in the atelier, like the painting Boggy ground did it.

Let me finish in the city, this could be Copenhagen or Ringsted. The architects have discovered⁵ that the most important reason to going to downtown in the 70'ies and 80'ies was shopping. Today people visit the urban centre as a goal in itself, a unique destination. From being under pressure due to traffic, the urban life is under strong development. Downtown is growing as one of my drawing depict it. More people use more time in the center. Days and week has become longer. There are more activities Saturday and Sunday. The outdoor season has been significantly extended. The meeting between people is now as before the main purpose of the city. This is also what my newest serie is about.

Hans Jørgen Henriksen, Ringsted, 26 October 2008

⁵ Gehl, Gemzøe, Kirknæs og Søndergaard: Det nye byliv. Arkitektens forlag 2006. (in Danish)